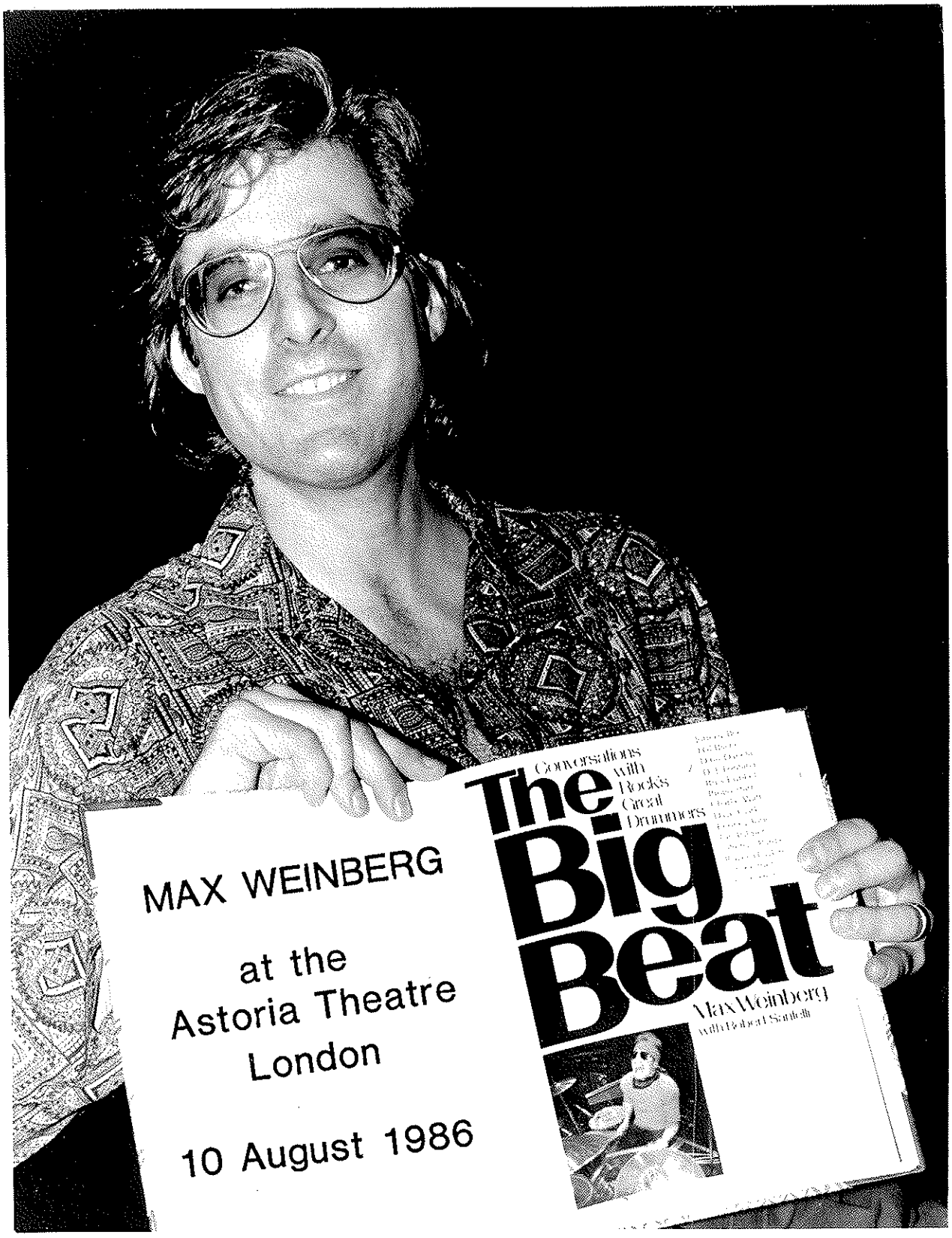
THE BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE



Wendy King and Dan French

THE BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE

MAX WEINBERG

at the
Astoria Theatre
London

10 August 1986

INTRO: You might know Asbury Park, New Jersey, you might know Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band, get ready to know Max Weinberg...

(CIRCUS SONG and slide show)

Seems like I've always played the drums. When I wasn't playing them I used to, used to look at the drumkit a lot, thinkin' about 'em, you know, dreamin' that someday I'd get a real set of drums. As I grew up through my teens I played every kind of job imaginable: audiences, talent shows, weddings and bar mitzvahs. I even bumped strippers and rimshotted bad comedians! I worked anywhere and everywhere. I plugged my drums in and set 'em up. I tell ya, those early bands were so much fun, we did everything by instinct.

A 'Want Ad'...I still can't believe I hooked up with Bruce and everyone after reading a 'Want Ad'. You know what got me most about that ad? Well, it said Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, but it also said on Columbia Records, well, that told me one thing: they were doin' a lot better than I was. This gig looked good. So I called him up, went over to the rehearsal hall in the city; I remember I had to lug my drums up four flights of stairs. I walked in the door, sweating, and there was the band, the E Street Band. The guitar player walked over, "How're ya doin'?" he said, "I'm Bruce; let's play." Let me tell ya, Bruce set the pace right away, he counted off the first song, we hit it and like - like magic, it fell into place. You see, Bruce is standing right in front of me, he's focusing all his energy right onto me; what a band leader, I thought. We got done with the first tune, so we hit a straight ahead rocker; and now get this, right in the middle - Boom! Bruce cuts the band, stops 'em dead, and I'm right there with him. I think that was the moment I passed the audition. I drove home that night, I felt different, this was the best band I'd ever sat in with, and I wanted the gig. I wanted to turn the car around, drive back and tell 'em I'd join up for nothing, no money, just let me play that music again. After all those years of searching for the right connection, it was like I'd finally made it home. When he asked me to join the band, well, I felt like it was me in 'Wild Billy's Circus Story', with the circus boss...

(Drumming improvisation)

MAX: Thank you, thank you; hello London, it's good to be here! You know, every time I see that video, that cracks me up! Man, I can't believe I ever looked like that. You know, in 1986, navy jacket, Fu Man Chu moustache, phew! Growin' up is a bitch. You know back then I knew that wild crazy shirts were gonna come back; I saved them all! You know that little picture of that kid drummer, yeah, I remember that one, that was me.

I was ten years old, it was 1961; man, I used to love to play the drums - all day, all night. I can remember I used to be in my room, you know, and I'd be going at it, and my parents would have friends come over, and they'd hear this racket and they'd say "Ruth, Bert" - my parents - "What IS that sound?" They'd say, "Oh, that's Max." "But what's he doin'?" "He's practising." "Well, what's he practising for?" "Well, he tells us he's going to be a big-time rock'n'roll drummer." "Ruth, Bert, don't let him do it!" Yeah, don't let him do it. They tell 'em, your kid's dreamin', and I guess I was.

Well, a few years later, I guess I must have been about nineteen years old, my uncle Bernie - OK, now let me tell you about my uncle Bernie. You know uncle Bernie, right, everybody's got an uncle Bernie, and he's the guy with the plaid jacket and the big fat stinkin' cigar and he's always pokin' you in the chest and telling you what's wrong with your life. He's punctuating all those remarks with puffs from that cigar. But my uncle Bernie used to get on me no end, he would never let up, he'd say "Max, drumming is no profession! What are ya, Meshugah? Get rid of those drums, wise up!" Well, this used to really piss me off.

Today, it's all under control. Now, it's a different story now. My uncle Bernie: "My man, Maxie, have a cigar! Maxie baby, how about six tickets for Giants Stadium?" Yeah, yeah.

Well, 1985, 1985 was an incredible year for those of us in the E Street Band; you know, when I think back to everything that went down - the tour, the album, all those people watching us, and us watchin' them back, I have to pinch myself: that was me up there playing the drums. To have been a part of everything that happened, that's really the thrill of my life because the 'Born In The USA' tour, it was a time that I'll never forget, sometimes it was so unreal it was like someone else's life flashing before me. You know from where I sat, I think I had the best seat in the house. And in each city we played, you know, practically every show, I was that kid drummer's dream come true. Because for as long as I've been a drummer, my dream has been to play in a band like ours.

You know, it's no problem for me to remember when that dream first began to shape itself in my head; I was five years old, it was 1956. I can remember bouncing around the floor with my two teenage sisters in front of this tiny little black and white television set, and we were waiting, along with the rest of America, for Elvis Presley to come on the Ed Sullivan Show.

And now you gotta picture this: I was five years old, I was a little kid, what did I know about Elvis Presley or rock'n'roll music? All I knew was that my sisters were so excited; this made me, you know, their little brother, this made me absolutely crazy. Well, suddenly, Elvis was on. It was absolutely amazing and mesmerising the way they took over our living room. Now when they hit the big number of the day which was 'Hound Dog', well, my sisters and I went totally out into orbit. Now D J Fontana who was Elvis Presley's original drummer, he played with him from 1954 to 1968, well when he hit that opening drum roll in 'Hound Dog', you know, the one that goes DA-DA DA-DA-DA-DA? Well, I picked up that beat and I started banging around the floor, that beat stopped me right in my tracks - "MAX!" my sisters yelled at me, but it didn't matter, 'cause I kept playing that beat harder and harder and harder. "MAX, STOP IT!" But I didn't hear 'em, no, because D J Fontana's drum beat completely swept me away, and I've never been the same since.

Well, a couple of years later, February 1964, everything changed, 'cause that was when the Beatles came to New York City. Now I know it was exciting over here, but in the States it was unbelievable. There's been nothing like that previous and nothing like that since.

It was fantastic, you know, and I was still that little kid with the drum set and a dream, but now I had something else; I had a hero - Ringo Starr. When I saw Ringo play with the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show, I could see he was having the time of his life, and I wanted some of that.

Suddenly I started to visualise what drumming could really mean, 'cause you see, when I sat down at those drums, I entered a world unlike anything I ever knew. It didn't matter at the time how much or how little I actually knew about playing the drums, all I knew was that when I played them I felt 'real', I felt alive, I felt like somebody. You see, for me, drums and rock'n'roll music became much more than just a hobby or a musical pastime, they were the key to do with everything I'd ever dreamed about. One of the reasons I'm here tonight, apart from showing you some special videos that I've brought, is also giving you a bit of my own musical philosophy, is to talk about dreams. Now why dreams? I'm not talkin' about Sigmund Freud type dreams, I'm talkin' about rock'n'roll dreams.

You see, everybody, in their own way, has a rock'n'roll dream, that secret inner desire to have it happen for you. Doesn't matter how outrageous it is, or whether you really think it'll come true; the important thing is to have the dream; the other important thing to know is, to make that dream come true is so hard.

You know you get to those places in your life, in your quest, where you wonder, is this thing ever gonna happen for me? I know that in my career I've had those doubtful moments because one of the stories of the E Street Band is that it wasn't always easy and it wasn't always fun. But after twelve years with the group, I now know I can make that dream come true; to get what you want, you have to work towards it with enthusiasm, persistence, dedication and faith. Now those are nice words, but the idea is, it's like you gotta look at that light at the end of the tunnel and you've just gotta keep walkin' towards that light. You gotta keep workin' towards that light, no matter how tough it gets, you can't stop walkin'. And most important, you gotta keep believing that one day you can get there.

As I said, I've been with the band since 1974, there's been members of the band that have been around longer than I have. For example Dan Federici, our organ player, has been with Bruce since 1968; eighteen years, that's a long time to hold down a musical job. It's an even longer time to keep a band together. Now let me see some hands and some noise; how many musicians are out there tonight? Yeah? Where are you guys, huh? All right, good. You know what I'm talkin' about, one of the hardest things in the world is to keep a band together. People leave all the time for different reasons, some good reasons, some bad reasons. You know they always say that it's much harder to stay together when you're struggling. I think it's harder to stay together when you're successful because you know everybody tends to see the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, it's not as hungry around the home front.

While we in the E Street Band, we work hard to keep our thing together and we've all really learned a lot, we've learned a lot about music and the music business, and the bottom line of that thing is that you can never take it for granted, that it's not a business; you gotta keep your eye on the ball. We learned how to make records; on a lot of occasions we learned how not to make records, too. We learned the hard way, and I mean the hard way, by staying on the road, month after month, year in and year out. And probably most importantly of all, and this is something that, well, we try to prove every night, we learned how to shake off the effects of a sleepless, twelve hour bus ride and hit that stage smokin'.

Let me tell you, the last twelve years of my life have been quite an experience. I guess in a way you could say that all that happened to Bruce, happened to me and it happened to every other member of the E Street Band as well.

It feels great to be able to stand here tonight, at the Astoria Theatre in London, of all places, and to tell you that I think that the success that we enjoyed on our last year's world tour, it proved that if you hang in there, don't give up, you can catch up with a dream.

Now I'm assuming that nobody came here tonight expecting to find Max Headroom? OK, now let me ask you all a question. Those of you who are here - we all are here! How many of you saw us at the Hammersmith Odeon in '75? Yeah? Hey, great. How about at the six nights we played at Wembley Arena in '81? Two or three more, all right! Now let me ask you this: how many of you out there saw us for the first time on the 'USA' tour, last time? First time? OK, you guys who saw us for the first time, let me tell ya, you're not alone, because all throughout that

tour, the whole 18 months of it, people'd come up to me, you know, kids sometimes 14, 15 years old, and they'd say, "Max, is this your first tour with Bruce?" You know, they'd seen the videos, 'Born In The USA', 'Glory Days', and the look on their faces when I told them that I'd been with Bruce for over ten years was like: "You mean Bruce always uses the same musicians?" I couldn't believe how little they knew of our history. So, for tonight, you veterans out there, well, let me recap a little of that history. And for those of you who may be unfamiliar with the early days of Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, well, let me take you back to 1974, and give you my perspective on the story, what I call 'a view from the back of the stage'. Well, there was the E Street Band before '74, as you saw on the video they recorded Bruce's first two albums, 'Greetings From Asbury Park', 'The Wild, The Innocent and The E Street Shuffle', and in the band were David Sancious, who played keyboards, and Vini Lopez, Bruce's original drummer. Now Vini's drum seat was eventually taken over by a guy named Ernie Carter; he played on the single, not the album, he played on the single of 'Born To Run'.

Well, from the beginning the heart and soul and the guy who was in the group the longest has been, I think you know his name, Clarence Clemons, you know, the Big Man? Clarence, Garry Tallent our bass player and also Dan Federici, who I already mentioned. Now 1974 was the year, that was the year in which you could say the longest standing version of the band was created, because that's when Roy Bittan and I joined the band, and as I said in the video, it really pays to read the 'Want Ads'. Yeah, I joined the band August 1974, and my life changed dramatically and immediately. One month I was out of work, unemployed, the next month I was playing in Philharmonic Hall in New York City. I mean, it was a dream come true. When I look back to those first few days that I was with the group, the thing that stands out in my mind was that look on those guys' faces. The other guys in the band, you know, if you look at Bruce's eyes, Clarence's eyes, and you knew they were serious. They were not messing around with this thing, you could kind of feel, you could tell, they knew they were going places. The first couple of places we went was on tour, yeah, the fall, 1974, almost 13 years ago; well, they were amazing times. I'd never been on the road before, and, well, like most bands in the early formative days of their career, the main thing that we had going for us was our love for the music we were playing, and our commitment to playing it the best we knew how. The other thing that made the most indelible impression on me, that I remember the most, was those long rides. Oh, man! When you travel in the United States, you're going six, seven hundred miles a night and we were driving ourselves in a car with a trailer behind us. It was tough, we changed at the wheel, somebody'd drive, the other guys would try to sleep in the back, all scrunched up with each other; all bands go through that. You can never sleep. I mean that tour was five months long, and I don't think I ever slept. Now we really thought we'd hit the big time when we got a tour bus.

Now you've probably seen cuts of a tour bus, right? You know, plush velvet seats, slots for beer and video cassette recorders, mirrors on the ceiling, mirrors on the table. You've seen those kind of buses, right? Well, we got our bus, but this wasn't one of those buses. Nah, we didn't have video cassette recorders, we were lucky to have a radio in this thing. We were luckier when it worked! Man, it was tough, but now I'll tell you why we thought we'd hit the big time. We did have these tables, these tables were great because you could fold them down onto the floor like bunk beds. Now this is what the big time came in, the luxury of it all; you could lie down. You could lie down on those rides! OK, today it might not seem like so much, right, but we weren't making any money so, like, this was like the heights! Yeah, you could lie down, now of course you were sleeping two, sometimes three guys to a bed, but it didn't matter, 'cause you were lying down, and you could stretch out. I can't tell ya how many times I woke up in the morning with one or more of the E Street Band member's faces right up against mine, or worse, his feet! Oooh, yeah those days were tough you know, but you had to be dedicated to make it through that. One of the things that helped you was you'd look around that bus and you'd see everybody going through the same thing. You know, that feeling of one for all and all for one, 'the struggle', and it's a good feeling because it created a camaraderie, it created a spirit, that's what makes a band.

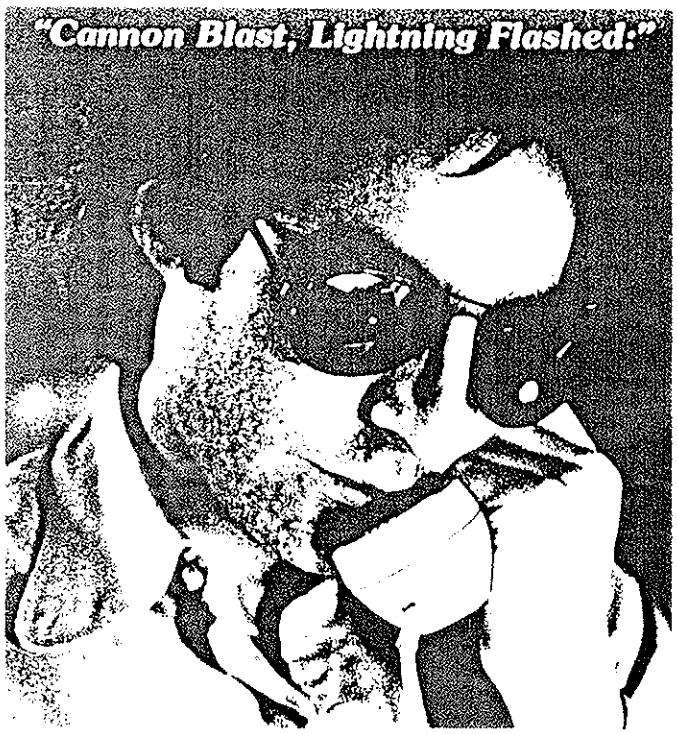
Well, we finished that tour in the winter of '75, and I felt fantastic about it. You know they made Roy and I feel like we'd been there forever, made us feel so at home. I took a lot of great experiences away from that tour. I took away something else, I took away my dignity nickname - 'Mighty Max', yeah, Mighty Max. Yeah, that's me! Yes, they first started calling me that early on in that tour. I liked that, yeah! I was Mighty Max. Dig me! Say, man let me tell ya, I used to rock myself to sleep at night, on that bus, man - "I'm Mighty Max!" It affected my walk, you know! Yeah, I was Mighty Max, yeah, that was me.

After we finished that tour, we started to rehearse for what became Bruce's next record, called 'Born To Run'; and I was so excited, I

couldn't wait to get in the studio. You see, 'cause all throughout the first tour I'd been playing songs that had been recorded by Bruce's original drummer Vini, and now, now let me get a chance to lay down some of my own drumming on Bruce's music, and I couldn't wait. Let me at that studio! I'll tell ya, I was so excited; I was also really nervous. You see, these were my first professional recording sessions, I felt kinda like I was in over my head. Kinda felt like a talented amateur with these guys who'd been recording for a couple of years. You know now recording can be very different from playing a concert, you see in a concert it's loud, it's sweaty, you got a lot of good looking girls out there to turn you on, but at a recording studio; let me tell ya, it's your drums, the tape, and they got this little red button that they can press if they just want to hear you. Well, when they do that, you better be on top of it, because you are naked.

Now that was a tough record for me to get to, 'Born To Run'. I tell ya, at one point, we were playing a song, recording a song called 'Jungleland', and that's a long song, it's nine minutes long. There's a technique in recording, for those of you who haven't ever been in a studio, where you could tape it in sections, some bands would do that, and 'Jungleland' has a lot of different movements. Not our band, not Bruce - straight through. We played that sucker about 18 times in a row. Every time we got to Clarence's sax solo in the middle when the band holds the chord, the rhythm fell apart, we had to go back to the beginning. Now you know when that happens everybody looks at the drummer! We ended up recording that song - well, I'll tell you what we did, we set up in a circle around Bruce, so that he could keep an eye on you know who, and he led us through it, counting out loud, "One, two, three!" That was a tough record to get through, but I did make it through.

Let me tell ya, the first time I heard that record on the radio, well, that was a moment I'll never forget, you know, the first time you do anything, the first experience you have of anything, it's meaningful, it's momentous.



You know, the first year in school, the first good mark you get on a paper. Fourth year after school, the first - you get - you know what I mean! Well, this kind of record, you hear it for the first time coming across the airwaves, there's no other feeling like it. I remember just where I was. Roy Bittan and I were living in a house overlooking the ocean at the Jersey Shore, and I was upstairs and he was downstairs, and he called up to me, "Max, Max, we're on!" I ran down the stairs as fast as I could and I almost broke my neck. When I got down there he turned up the volume as loud as he could and both of us sat there transfixed as 'Thunder Road' came out across the airwaves. Yeah, well we were sitting there, you know, the piano introduction, Roy perked up on that! He dug that a lot, and then the drums came in; I sorta got into it a little bit more, and by the middle of the song, our mouths had dropped open, we couldn't believe it; I mean, that was us. What a feeling. It's that feeling of innocence, and I've always tried to stay in touch with that feeling because somehow, you need that feeling to make you honest.

When 'Born To Run' came out in the summer of '75, things started to happen to us real fast and there were a lot of changes that went down. One of the biggest and best changes that occurred at that time was that Steve Van Zandt joined the band - Little Steven. Yeah! I see some Little Steven fans out there, that's good. I'm a Little Steven fan too because when he joined the band, it took us to yet another level; he's a great arranger, he's a fabulous musician, and you sort of look at it like, well, Bruce was the visionary, Steve was the mechanic. Yeah, that was a great change; like I said, things started to happen real fast. There was so much publicity generated around our band at the time, those of you that might remember back to 1975. Now as you saw in the video, I guess the biggest example of that is when Bruce got his picture on the cover of Time and Newsweek, during the same week. Looking back, you know, this is funny. I thought, how could these two magazines screw up so badly, you know! Covers of the same story, of the same artist in the same week, it had never happened before in the States. And then we came over to London for the first time when we played the Odeon, and ah, that hype, that publicity followed us, you know, we started reading things like 'Rock's New Messiah'. 'The Next Big Thing'. 'The Future Of Rock'n'Roll'. Look, it's tough to get on stage after people have been hearing this because, you know, how do you follow that, people sometimes turn off. Hype can be a good and a bad thing, and that's the bad part of it, that sometimes people won't even bother to listen to what you're doing. I remember when we came over here, we drove up at the Hammersmith Odeon, and right outside the theatre was this huge sign. Now coming to England to play, you know, and seeing the sign, to me was wild; to Bruce, he saw the sign, and let me tell you what it said, it said 'London is finally ready for Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band'. That didn't go over very well with Bruce! Now in fact he went inside, he climbed up to the very top and crawled through the window and he went out there on the marquee, and he pulled the sign down. He was not in a great mood.

Yeah, you know, this hype, this publicity I think kinda made him feel like getting as big as possible as soon as possible; that wasn't his thing. Now it was his career, he was going to be towed the wanted it to go and not be the victim of some machine. So he kind of withdrew, he got restrained and pulled in everything, backed off, didn't get into it. Myself, on the other hand: 'Mighty Max'! My name in lights, big band. I got into it. Yeah, you know I was only 11 months out of living in my parents' home, and I was as green as a rookie can be, and suddenly all this publicity and coming to England and playing; well, it seemed like all of my rock'n'roll dreams were coming true and I wanted to reap those rewards. Or what I thought was rewards, that all this success was throwing at me, yeah, you might say I developed an attitude.

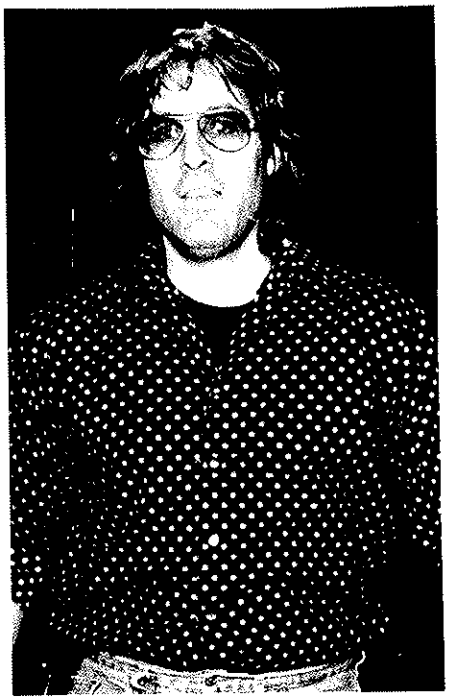
I remember coming over here, I remember that flight over, and I had these wild visions in my head, right? We were going to get off the plane and in those days you didn't go through that gangway, you exited right onto the field. So you know what I'm thinking, right, our reception naturally, everything I've read, is gonna be like you know who, 11 years earlier, when they came over to the United States! So I didn't even bother to look out of the window. I had my move ready; now, I'm glad I didn't do this, but what I was gonna do was..! Hey, it was a good thing I didn't, because there was nobody there to meet us except the baggage man and truck!

We also played Hollywood on that tour. Hollywood, USA, also known as Los Angeles, but to me it was Hollywood. Now I don't know if you know the geography that well of the United States, but you know that when they say the West Coast they mean Hollywood, the East Coast is New York, they never refer to the East Coast as New Jersey.

We do, they don't! So now Pennsylvania is the farthest I'd ever been in my life, and Pennsylvania is right next to New Jersey, so going to Hollywood was a big deal; see, we played the Roxy Theatre, which was a small 700 seat club on Sunset Strip. Sunset Strip, can you believe it? There we were, well we tore that town up, we played there for four nights. I had it together; the first thing I did when I got off the plane was I got a new pair of prescription shades; had to be prescription, I'm blind as a bat without. Sort of lowered the cool quotient, but that was all right! Now, the next thing I did was, I got up real early, so I could make sure I got the best lounger at the pool, that's very important in my life, very, very important. And then, well, I got into my 'Hollywood attitude'. I remember one night, now you've heard about Hollywood parties, right? Now I went to a couple of Hollywood parties that would knock your socks off, you know, somebody in the crew said "Hey, this is a great party, let's go!" So we went, it was at this palace overlooking the Hollywood hills. It was wild, I walked in there, I thought I walked into a movie set, I saw so many famous people. This was the first time I'd been in Hollywood and like, there it was in this house; so now you see I had my shades, I had my attitude, I had everything going. I figured, well you know, I would sorta slink around, look over the thing, be cool, you know, maybe I could bump into someone with whom I could develop a close impersonal relationship! I was kinda slinking around the party, taking it all in and suddenly someone called out my name: "Max, Max!" and he tapped me on the shoulder, I turned around. "Mighty Max!" the guy said. I said "Yeah?" Warren Beatty, Warren Beatty the famous movie actor, he's talking to me. He said "Yeah, Max, Max, I caught your show, you guys put on a helluva show, you're a great drummer!" "Warren, YEAH!" Like that, "Yeah, man!" So we started to talk, you know. Oh yeah, I started to fantasise, now you know in the movies where the music swirls up and everything gets all hazy, I started to go into this dream, right. Not listening to what he's saying, I'm just thinking of the possibilities. I got the shades, I got the attitude, I'm in the band - but I got Warren. I'm 'in' now! What can I do? How can I take advantage of this situation I've been thrust into? Now it came to me: "Now excuse me, ladies, but Warren and I were wonderin' if you would care for a port?" "Ah, Warren, Warren Beatty, I was just talkin' to him a second ago, has anyone seen him, it's very important I get back in touch with him."

Yeah, I'm in my daze, it's all coming together now and suddenly I hear the sound of high pitched laughter coming from off in the distance; it kinda shakes me out of that dream. I look around and Warren's walked on; that's OK, we're tight, you know, catch up with him later, and I go along to the party, investigating where this sound's coming from. I start to slink again, you know; well, it's coming from what looks to be a spare bedroom or a den. And I look in the door and I see two of the most famous rock stars of the 1970s sitting on a couch with six of the most beautiful young women - <u>young</u> women! - that I have ever seen, and they're talkin', sure. I figure now, this is my big chance, you know, in case I need a back-up, I got Warren. Here it is, let me at it. I start to walk to the door and just as I get to the door - boom!. A guy slams the door in my face. Hey man, that was cold. Mighty Max, man.

I didn't make the connection that night, but there were other nights. You know when I started to realise that this kind of rock'n'roll



success that I was imagining of living can lay a trap for young impressionable musicians, you know, I was really dazed by a lot of this.

Yeah, sometimes I lost my concentration. Occasionally that happened on stage; when that happened, that was bad. Everybody's got their most embarrassing moment, right? I'll tell you mine. It's not here! Now you see we were booked to play at the Bottom Line, New York City, now that's a small club too, it's only 450 seats. We were debuting the 'Born To Run' record, we were playing 10 shows over 5 nights, and Saturday night we were playing live on the radio, first time any of us had done that. This was a big deal gig and highly pressurised, we had to get it right. Now when we hit the stage that night, that club was electric, I mean you could have cut that atmosphere with a knife, it was fantastic. There were lines around the block, they'd never get in but the lines were there anyway. When we hit the stage we were so hot, and Bruce was unbelievable. He can be unbelievable, but he was really unbelievable! You know the Bottom Line, out from the stage they've got these tables that radiate out, away from the stage, and at one point during the show Bruce jumped on the front table and he started running down it, dancing. I mean drinks were flying everywhere, cheeseburgers were hitting people in the face, it was unbelievable. He gets to the end, he looks back at us 'cause he's seen the President of CBS Records out there, the former President of CBS Records. Well he sees the guy and there's a great line in one of the songs about a record company giving him a contract, and he goes over and jumps in the guy's lap, the chair bends, and he starts singing this line to him, it was great.

Well we finished that first set, I was in a great mood, I mean I was feeling no pain, so I figured I'll hit the bar. See if I can meet up with that certain special anyone. So I'm at the bar and I'm having a couple of drinks and I'm starting to feel real good, sorta pressing the flesh, you know, meeting the crowd, and when we hit the stage for the second set I was feeling really, really good. And feeling no pain. Now if you've seen our shows you'll know that at one point sometimes we end with the song 'Rosalita'. OK, now 'Rosalita', at the end of this song there's a very special part, the part the band loves the most, that's when Bruce introduces us to the audience. Now what we do, at that point we get very hooked up in the E Street credo, and that is, there's one thing you can always be sure of in the E Street Band, you can never, ever be sure of what Bruce is gonna do. You just gotta watch, gotta keep your eyes and ears open, pay attention and at the end of 'Rosalita' we hit this riff - ba, da da da, right. And I start playin' my beat. Now Bruce starts running around the stage, going back and forth like this, back and forth, now this is what you see, six pairs of eyes going like this... I'm playing my beat, Bruce is running back and forth, and like I say, you know, I was feeling good, I was feeling no pain whatsoever, hey, it's Saturday night, the E Street Band in New York City, live on the radio! Mighty Max! I'm playing my beat and now I'm looking around and suddenly wow, I'm not looking at Bruce anymore, but hey, I got it together, forget it! People are looking at me, that spotlight's right on me. I look over to the left of the stage and I see this great looking girl, and I think she's looking right at me, so I look away 'cause I gotta keep cool. I keep playing that beat and I'm looking around, I look back at her and I can tell she's definitely looking right at me, and I'm looking right at her, and she's pickin' up that beat and I'm picking up the tempo. Yeah, and I start playin' that beat to her and I'm playin' that beat better than I've ever played that beat in my life and I'm playing it harder and harder and harder and faster and faster and faster and suddenly - I realise I'm the only one playing! See, Bruce has cut the band and I'm in, oh no, I'm in deep now. Bruce's reaction was great, this is what he did. He did it again, he cut me off. But I was so shook up, I was so freaked out I could not stop playing, no matter what I did I couldn't stop my hands, it was horrible, I'm playin' this beat, and this puts Bruce in no great mood. He turns around and starts walking over to me, and man, let me tell ya, he looks 20 feet tall! He's coming right at me and I feel two feet small. He comes over, he grabs my hands, he takes the sticks out of my hands, he puts his hands around my neck and he starts shaking me back and forth and up and down and all around, stretching my neck. Aagh man, I was so embarrassed! Oh; he puts me back down. The mood has changed dramatically.

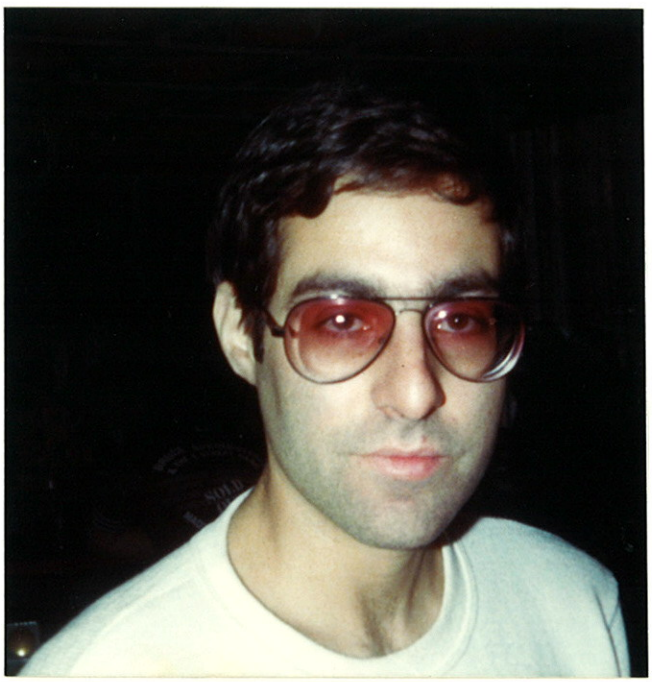
Suddenly all those eyes were on me. Now Bruce walks to the edge of the stage, almost out of eyesight, could barely see him in the shadows, and he sees those eyes. I'm rooted; I'm stultified. He pulls his earlobe for a cue, luckily we all hit it, we go back into the song. Bruce starts running around doing his bit again but he's got this look in his eye. He's got this maniacal look in his eye, and he's looking right at me. Right, he gets to Garry Tallent, who stands on my left, the bass player, with his introduction; and I'm just hopin', I'm just prayin' that he forgets I'm on the stage, doesn't introduce me, there is no drummer! No such luck. OK, Bruce goes to the front of the stage, right, walks up to his microphone and again he cuts the band off. He looks back at me real slow, he looks back at the audience and then in an absolute monotone he deadpans my introduction to the entire audience, and the whole world is listening: "On the drums, the not so Mighty Max." Aagh, man, I wanted to die, I wanted to crawl under that rock you always heard about.

Well, we finished up the rest of the night and I was so depressed, I felt cold, I felt small, man I blew it bad. So after the show I went backstage, went over to Bruce and I said "Bruce!" I said "Bruce!" (begs) He went ... I said, "Bruce, what can I say, it'll never

happen again, I'll never, ever take my eyes off you!" You know, it was interesting, he thought a moment. He let it sink in, that pregnant moment. He said to me "Max, gotta give ya a little advice!" You know, he talks like that! He said, "You gotta watch out for the curve balls." (laughter) That's what I said! But then it started to sink in. Yeah, curve balls. You know, everything's not down the straight and easy. I started to realise that there was more to this thing than just dreaming about success, you know you really had to keep your eye on that ball.

Well, I'll tell ya, that was the night I started to grow up; I've never taken my eyes off him since. Everytime we get to that point in 'Rosalita'..!

Well let me tell you, the years 1976 - 79 were tough for us, you know, when I said before, you know it wasn't all easy and it wasn't all fun, that was the period of time that I was referring to, because our group, the group, Bruce especially, was subjected to a really intense test of faith due to a severe legal fight between Bruce and his former manager. I mean, it was a real one-two punch to Bruce. It was hard for us, you know, and we all kind of took it out on that test of faith, just to see how strong we were, especially Bruce, for he is so strong. It was a real credit to Bruce's faith in himself and his art, really his life, that he pulled all of us, all of us in the band, through this really dark period.



Well, when the lawsuit ended and the air cleared, we made preparation to go into the studio again to record what would become Bruce's next record which was 'Darkness On The Edge Of Town'. Now maybe because he'd been prevented, you know, from recording for so long, things changed in his mind, he started writing and recording more songs than ever. It gave me a little bit of a problem, because we could never really learn our parts, we just sort of had to do it very spontaneously, gone were those days of long lazy rehearsals, ah, like on 'Born To Run'; and get down to the complicated arrangements.

What happened now was we sort of just set up live in the studio and played, it gave me a little bit of a problem, I didn't have time to reflect on what I was doing. You know, there was an element in my drumming that was, well, kind of sloppy. In my Mighty Max role, I figured it was style. It wasn't really style, it was more just a lack of finesse, you know, lack of control. There are songs on that 'Darkness' record that, well, I don't think I did justice to his music. You know, there's others I think I did pretty well on it. I think 'Darkness On The Edge Of Town', that song was a good one that I played on. 'Candy's Room' I like a lot, but there are other songs that, for example, I'll give you a good example of what I mean. 'Badlands', that's a great song, listen to that song, listen to those words; do not listen to the drumming! The drumming is wrong, now you might not hear it, I'll describe it, you might hear it, but you might not hear it when you listen to it, but I hear it every time; and it sticks out like a sore thrumb now - a sore drum - a sore thumb!

See, going into the second verse, I start playing the tom-toms, and what I do there is death for a drummer, I slowed down; and what that indicates is a lack of concentration. I'm very, very bad. Like I say, when you go home, if you have that record, listen to it; you'll hear it.

You know, when I was back on that 'Darkness On The Edge Of Town' record, the thing that I think is that I was growin' up, I mean I was learning things, I was getting experience, but fortunately I was doing it in public. I found out something very interesting, very important, I found out why they call it a record. They call it a record because it lasts forever.

People ask, "Max, you're a drummer, what in the world are you doing a lecture about?" Well, I've been going around talkin' to audiences about six months now, and I talk about a lot of things, you know, I talk about my musical experiences, I talk about messin' up on stage and the consequences of that.

Really what I talk about is growin' up and how I grew up in those things because I've been thinking a lot about it it's occurred to me that a big part of growin' up is deciding what to do for yourself when you get to the crossroads. You know, when you get to that point in your career or your marriage or your life when you wonder if you can go any further. Can you break through that wall, can you go up around it, get what you want, get what you need. I came to just such a crossroads during the recording of our next album, 'The River', with that sloppy drumming I was talkin' about, you know. I heard it all along, but I figured no-one ever said anything to me about it, so I figured I was getting away with it, guess my drumming was OK.

Now I found out the very very big difference between my drumming controlling me and me controlling my drumming while we were recording the song 'Out In The Street'. Now, see the groove to that song is tempo, it's all up and down, it's slowed up, it's slowed down, it's sped up, nothing was even. Now I'd heard it, but it was made even more obvious to me, more painfully obvious, when Bruce sat me down and said "Max, we gotta talk." That little pit came back. He said, "You're the drummer, it's mainly your responsibility to keep the rhythm solid; to keep the architecture of the band in tempo, and that's not happening. You're not cutting it." Aagh, man, this hit me like a ton of bricks. Those curve balls I was looking out for? This was like a steam roller.

Man, I couldn't believe it. I wasn't cutting it. Now looking back, I don't think Bruce meant it as severely as I took it, but I took it to mean get it together or else. You know, it was really a good thing I took it that way because I

knew I had to respond, this conversation was over in a minute and a half, but it changed forever the way I view myself and my work. That drive home that night was very, very long and very, very slow. You know, I kept thinking, hey, I was good enough to get in the band, could I become good enough to stay in the band? This was really the crossroads. You know in my mind I'd start imagining, you know, this is a great gig, there's a lot of great drummers out there who'd love to do this and if I didn't get it together, I'd be out and they'd be in. It was pretty obvious that I'd have to deal les with inspiration and just get down to some basic hard work. You know, that moment of recognition, it came to me in a flash, I mean I realised that this dream, this dream of making it big, that wasn't enough, that was only half the story, and that dream was beginning to fade. Because the dream doesn't take into account all of the hard work that's needed to make it come true for yourself; that needs something else, for that, you need a goal.

Well, my goal came, I wanted to tune myself up to the best drummer I could. Here I was, 28 years old, I'd been playing drums for half my life, how in the world could I turn myself around? I had a goal. So what? What was I gonna do? The very first thing I did had nothing to do with really playing the drums, I tried to go back in my memory to what it was about the drums that made me get interested in them in the first place. You know, once I got past the fact that, well, I wanted to have a lot of fun and meet a lot of good looking girls, once I got past that I remembered that those drums and me were a connection. They gave me self-respect and what I wanted now more than anything else was that feeling back again, and also the respect of my band leader. So like a little kid, I went out and I found a drum teacher, a coach, and I went back to the beginning, went back to the very first thing I'd ever studied, right back to the beginning. Now this guy I found, his name is Sonny Igoe; he's an older, big band drummer, he used to play with Benny Goodman in the 50s. Now the first day I went in, Sonny said "OK, now sit down and play something." So immediately when that happened, you know, I kinda went into my Mighty Max pose! I sat down and I started playing every fancy lick I ever thought of, all these crossovers. Sonny stopped me, he said, "Pretty fancy, pretty fancy. OK, Mr Hotshot Rock'n'roll drummer, play to this." He put on a metronome, a click-track.

Now for any drummers out there, if there are any drummers out there, you know if you've ever done this, you've ever played to a click-track, it's hard to do. So Sonny said, "Yeah, just sit down and play a simple rock beat. You like rock'n'roll." So I sat down and started to play it and as soon as I started to play this thing, I sped up. So naturally I had to get back with it so I got underneath it, I slowed down. No matter what I do, I couldn't play with it, it was so simple but I couldn't do it because the thing keeps perfect time and as I already told you, that wasn't my style.

Well, Sonny got a big kick out of this, said: "You rock'n'rollers kill me. Say, you guys are all alike, you're all style, no finesse, no technique, no control." This pissed me off too. You know, in my mind I thought to myself, "All right, I'm gonna show this guy." I was wrong; he showed me. For the next year and a half Sonny worked my butt off, takin' me right back in the beginning, trying to get rid of all those bad habits and bad attitudes that I'd built up over the years, that 'star attitude'. One of the things that I've learnt was that those breaks between records and tours I'd never played the drums, I'd never have anything to do with them. I was much more content to get in my Jaguar convertible, go down to Asbury Park and look for a ..., you know what I'm talking about, cruising. That was very bad because what happened was I got rusty, and in those days, in the middle of the night, you get a phone call from Bruce: "Max!" You know, the voice! That's the worst imitation of Bruce I ever heard! You get a phone call saying "Studio tomorrow, two o'clock." Now we haven't played in six months, I haven't touched the drums. I was a little rusty. I would take that rustiness in the studio and it would show up on the tracks, it was just my luck that those are a lot of the tracks that got released.

I had to break this cycle, the way I did it with Sonny's help was to develop a practice routine for myself, to get me back in touch with that feeling, to get me in touch with some technique. So what I did was I went down in my cellar every day, now this wasn't to some fancy studio, this was to four concrete walls, that drum set, my sticks, my book, and that damn metronome; and I lived with the thing. Now very conveniently, I have a drum set, I'll show you what I did. You see drumming is a lot like sculpture, except rather than dealing with a chisel and a stone, you got drumsticks and a skin. What you're trying to do with those two implements is to take the space and sculpt in rhythm. I found out that the beauty of the music very often lies in the space between the piece, that's where the groove is, that's where the time is. What I had to do somehow was get more in touch with that feeling. Not to be nervous, not speed up, not slow down but just stay right on it.

Space - the final frontier! It's very important that I do this; you know, the late John Bonham, one of the best drummers for dealing with space. You know his beat was so big you could drive a truck though it, he was fabulous. The big sound, that's the kind of thing that I wanted to get into, a big sound, not a lot of fancy techniques. So what I did, I started to practice with the metronome, I lived with that thing. Now in drumming, for those of you who are not drummers, there's a thing called rudiments. Rudiments are like scales and if you're having problems with your drumming, it's a good place to start from because it can get you back to zero, it can get you back in touch with some of those original feelings.

Rudiments like I said are calisthenics, they're exercises. One of the very first exercises is called a 'single paradiddle'. You know, I love these names! Paradiddle. Very descriptive. What you do is you take a right hand beat, a left hand beat and then two more rights, and then you reverse it. This was a great way for me to get back in touch with that space. This is what it sounded like: I put that beat on a tempo mark of about 70:

DRUM DEMONSTRATION

And I practised that pattern - that is such drudgery to do that! I did that for about six months to that beat. But I really started to develop that feeling of space, and it led to bigger and better things. Now it's funny, you have a single paradiddle, so it naturally follows that we're gonna have - what? - a double paradiddle! A double paradiddle is twice as hard. It's not really, that was a joke!

Now we'll take that - so the double paradiddle is neat because, well, you can practice something practical on it, you can play a little faster; and you can get to a more rolling kind of motion that sounds something like this...

Try to play all those beats as equally as possible; now the neat thing about the double paradiddle is that if you're presented with something in waltz time, you can apply it to the drum set; sounds something like this...

So, it starts to develop. See, practice means rudiments, and the things that you really find out about yourself and your instrument is, is exactly what you started with, however many years ago. It's that to play the thing, is just fun...

Fun is what it's about. Now that was pretty fancy; you wouldn't normally do that!

The idea is to get back in touch with that simplicity, to play something like this, now it may sound simple but this is the essence of what I do with Bruce and the E Street Band. I'll play the basic beat that I play practically every song; ah, I'll use a song like on 'Born In The USA': 'Darlington County'. Now that's a very simple rock beat, but when you play it, in solid time and a good feeling, it can mean the world:

DRUM DEMONSTRATION

By practising I got in touch with a concept that I hadn't had much to do with in my former days; self-discipline led to developing patience, the patience was of course because I realised if I kept at it, I'd get better. I did get better. During this period of rediscovery, finding out the true me, I like to call the re-invention of Mighty Max into Max Weinberg, drummer.

We were still recording the 'River' album; in fact I'd go in the studio at night, and I started to hear results, thankfully the band did too. Now on the title song of that album, 'The River', that's when I first noticed that I was getting it together. You know, we played it and I listened back to it in the control room, fills were good, time was solid, I did good, I felt good. I remember looking over to the side of the control room, Bruce was standing over there, he looked back at me and gave me one of these (thumbs up sign). That made me feel great.

I realised I was turning myself from that talented amateur and reaping the rewards of what being a professional musician was all about. And in a word that's respect.

Right after we got done with the 'River' record what do you think we did? Anybody know? Yeah, that's right, exactly, we went on the 'River' tour, which was a great experience for me, because now I was taking all these concepts and procedures and techniques that I was learning all that year, and I was able to apply it in my performance every night. Come up with some really simple playing. I felt good about that, I realised I wasn't all the way there but I was well on my way and I knew that I'd make it.

Well after the 'River' tour we took a long break; in the entertainment business they call it a 'hiatus'; I call it unemployment - out of work. It was about this time that Bruce went into his bedroom to record his solo acoustic record, 'Nebraska'. I went back into my basement and I started practising more than ever. I mean, I played so much during the day my hands would hurt, but when I emerged out of that cellar in the spring of '82, and we began recording again, my drumming was hot.

We had a two week run in the studio that spring in April of 1982 where we could do no wrong, it seemed. You know, in privacy I thought it was unbelievable all those things people were saying about us, I mean, the band was hot.

We recorded songs during that week, songs like 'Glory Days', 'I'm On Fire', 'Downbound Train', and my all time favourite song we've ever done, 'Born In The USA'. Yeah, that was a great one.

Let me tell you about that sesion, that 'Born In The USA' session. Now it was late at night and we were all dead tired, we were all sitting in the studio control room and Bruce goes out into the studio and takes out a notebook and his guitar. There's always a live mike on when he's doing this because we stay there and listen to what he's doing so we can see how the song develops. I've been in other sessions where once the momentum stops everybody leaves the room, everybody hits the phone. Some guys call their wives, other guys call their girlfriends, some guys call their wives and their girlfriends. No, not us. A joke - not us, please! We stay there, we listen to how it's going to progress and we start getting into this kinda chuggy rhythm, you know, coming up with these great words and one by one we all go back into the studio.

I sit down at my drums and I start playing this beat, you know, with these wild fills and a tough beat because the words seemed kinda tough. Roy Bittan and Dan Federici came up with this great synthesiser lick: Da-da-da-da-da-da, and in the time it took us to play it once we had it down, but we went back to listen to it and we blew our minds; I mean, to me it didn't sound like me. Like somebody else, my drumming

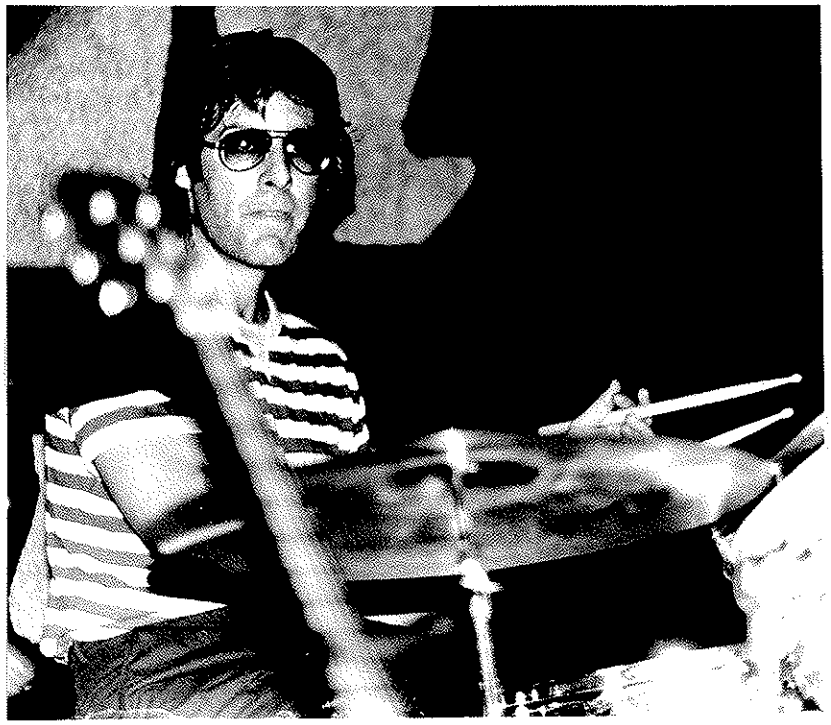
came through me. Well, I thought that was it, "hey, we got it, let's go home." Now Bruce is a perfectionist, he says "Look boys, let's rock it one more time, see if we can get it better."

So we went back out and played it again, and that's the take you hear. When I sit down and play my drums, the place that we got to on 'Born In The USA', that's the place that I try to hit. You know 'cause when you get there, wow, the air's all light, everything is rosy. You might not always make it but you've got to shoot for it, you want to hit that sweet spot, that's why they call it a sweet spot, because when you get there, it is sweet! A funny thing, the day after recording 'Born In The USA', I woke up in the morning and I couldn't move the index finger on my left hand. I could not move it. You know, I played it real hard and I figured that, well, you know, aches and pains are a part of drumming, no big deal, hell with it. But I couldn't bend it, you know. I went back to the studio that night and played harder and I woke up the next morning and I couldn't move any of the fingers on either hand. I got a little worried, this is kinda important! I went to an orthopaedic surgeon, you know, the guy looked at me and said "What in the world have you done to yourself? What have you been doing?" I said "Doc, I'm a drummer, I'm a rock'n'roll drummer and I play real hard." I said, "Well, maybe you've heard of my band?" He said "No, I haven't heard of your band, but whatever it is you're doing, you've done real damage to your hands, and I suggest that you stop whatever it is that you are doing."

Stop? I can't stop, I mean we're in the middle of recording and I wouldn't have stopped even if I could stop. I said forget it. So I went back and I played again and I played harder and harder and harder. I used to wake up in the morning and my hands were like claws, I couldn't open my fingers. My practice routine was shattered, my confidence started to slip away because I couldn't execute things on the drums that before this had been easy for me. I got real worried.

Well I went to doctor after doctor, each guy told me the same thing, you got advanced tendonitis. Advanced tendonitis, what the hell is that? You know, overuse of them, like tennis elbow. One guy said it was the worst case he'd ever seen and if he was me he'd seriously start looking around for another line of work. Great. You know, I kept figuring with my name I could be a lawyer! I couldn't leave that band, I mean, I'd worked hard to get in the band and I worked much, much harder to stay in the band, hell with them.

I tried everything. I tried physical therapy, laser beam massage, ultra sound stimulation, heat, cold, ice, hot wax, I was taking up to 25 aspirin a day, nothing worked. I read a story about a concert pianist who had had a similar problem and it mentioned the name of the doctor who had worked on him. So I went down, I wanted to make an appointment, I called him up and told him my name. The big date came and I went down to see the guy. Well it was funny 'cause when I walked in, he looked at me and he started to chuckle, I couldn't figure out why. I said "Doc, Doc, let me in on this, what's up?" He said, "You're Max Weinberg? I thought you were some little old Jewish guy!" Very funny. "No, no, Doc, Doc, I'm a drummer, I'm a rock'n'roll drummer, and I play real hard and look at my hands, take a look, tell me what's wrong." He looked at them and said "Yeah, you got tendonitis, probably the worst case I've ever seen." It made me feel great.



I said "Doc, I know I've got tendonitis, what can I do about it, can you do anything about it?" Well - I hoped and prayed. He said "Welll, there is a surgical procedure that you can have done on your hands. But I'll tell you, Max, your hands are so far gone, I don't know if I can help you."

Surgery? Could I really undergo surgery? I said "Well Doc, tell me, tell me, what do you do?" He said, "Well this is what you do; you lay down, and then you put your arm like this, and then we put a drape like this - you don't want to see this - and I get in there -" Doc, spare me the gory details.

I went home. I wondered. Could I really undergo surgery for this problem? My hands are my livelihood, my life, what if he slipped? He missed it? That would be the end of my career. I had not one, not two, but seven operations on my hands, and it feels unbelievably fantastic to be in London tonight talking to you and to be able to go like this - (flexes fingers) and say my hands feel great.

Well, during the period of my recuperation, I couldn't play the drums, you see, I had a cast on both hands; very difficult to play the drums with a cast on both hands! I just started to initiate work on a project I had in mind for a real long time. I wanted to write a book. You see, I wanted to write a book about drums, drumming, drummers, something. When we began recording 'Born In The USA' again I set out to work on this book and I called it 'The Big Beat'; I just happen to have a copy! Just like on TV, this is my book! This is 'The Big Beat', you know, I looked at it like my solo album, you know, some people record music, I recorded conversations. Conversations with musicians who I considered to be rock's great drummers. Now I call them rock's great drummers, not only because they were fantastic players, but because each and every one of them played an important part, a crucial part in the development of rock drumming in rock'n'roll music.

Some of them, as I've already said, Ringo Starr and D J Fontana, were my original rock 'n'roll heroes, you know, guys who inspired me to become a drummer. Others, like, ah, Jim Keltner, Roger Hawkins, Hal Blaine, Russ Kunkel, these are the greatest studio drummers of my generation and they were the guys I was talkin' to when I was trying to find out how to get better, how to develop myself. It was really a pleasure doing this book, you know,

taking their words, putting them into stories, putting their experiences on the written page. It was kinda like I was able to put the spotlight on these drummers, and it was a thrill. The biggest thrill was coming to London and meeting and talking to Ringo, because Ringo Starr more than anyone else, more than any other drummer or musician, changed my life. And I really should say that it wasn't just my life, it was a whole generation of drummers who were inspired by his drumbeat. You know, Ringo was as influential on rock drumming as Gene Krupa had been in jazz twenty-five years earlier. In fact Krupa said that his aim in drumming was to put the spotlight on the drummer, make the drummer a high class guy, and Ringo did the same thing.

So I can tell you when I was able by his generosity to interview him for the book, and it was my last interview because I wanted to get it right, and I was excited. I went to his house outside of London, we sat there all day talking drums, and remembering why we both got into it, that it was fun.

He told me a lot of stories, some of which are in the book. His stories were happy and they were sad, you know, but what emerged was a picture of a man, a musician, who with his drums and with that smile that turned me on, was able to, with his band, change the world, and do it with love. The only unfulfilled ambition he had was that he never got to see the Beatles play! and as he said to me, "That must have been great."

I also told him a story, when I was in ninth grade in the States, I was about 15 years old, I had this girlfriend, and in February of that year she was given two tickets to see the Beatles at Shea Stadium, 23 August 1966, and we were going. Now we both had six months to build up the anticipation of this event; I was going out of my mind. Well, when summer came along, I went away; she kept the tickets, The day before the concert, she broke up with me; she took some other guy. Is that cold, or what! I never got to see the Beatles, the other guy did. Wasn't a drummer, didn't care. I never got to see the Beatles. So I told Ringo of this, he leaned over and he said: "Max, how 'bout we give her a ring?" Yeah! Well, maybe someday.

Well, I finished the book, it took me 18 months and I finished just around the time we finished the 'Born In The USA' album. The last song we recorded was 'Dancing In The Dark', and that was a great session, and after the session Bruce took us into this separate studio that was being unused, and he had all these prototype album covers lined up against the wall, and he was asking each one of the band which we liked best, which one we thought would make the best album cover. He had this one shot, he was leaning against this tree in the backyard of his boyhood home in Freehold, New Jersey. He had this other shot where he was doing this, you know, this windmill with his guitar, right? And then he had this other shot; I think you know the one I mean. Now you see that was my choice, because that was the view I always saw!

Well, that brings me to the 'Born In The USA' tour. What a time it was! You know, people ask me what it was like, well in a word, it was fantastic! It was also a lot of hard work, but it's like an indescribable feeling. One of the best descriptions I've heard of what it was like was given by Nils Lofgren, our guitar player. Nils said in an interview, and I really liked what he said, he said that "being on stage with Bruce and the E Street Band is like someone's given you four hours to live, and that stage is where you're gonna spend your time. Now it's up to you, what are you going to do with yourself."

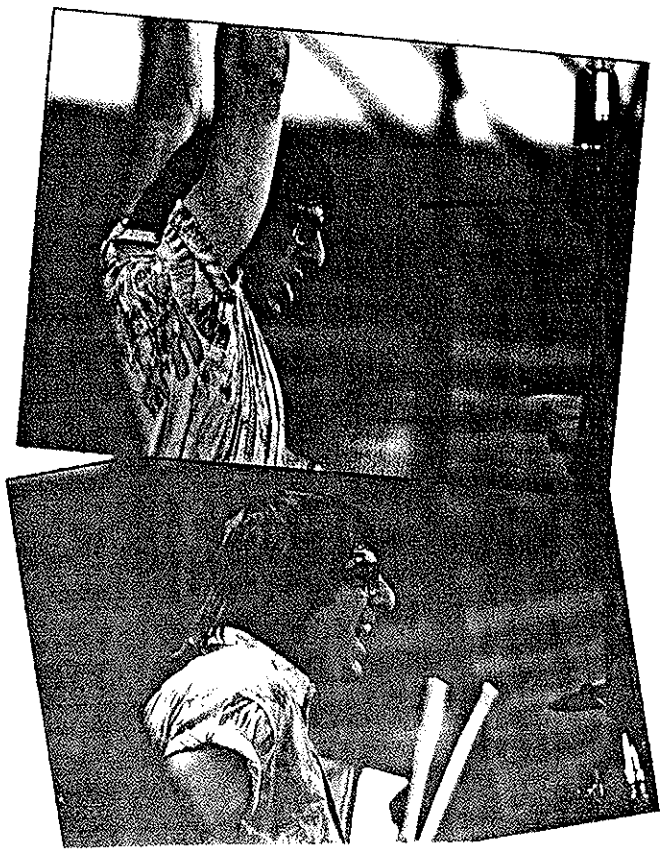
Yeah, I like that, because it really gives you that feeling of being alive, right on the edge, you know, that moment when everything is crystal clear, the stakes are high and you know you can do it. As I said earlier, I brought two videos, you know for those of you that didn't get to see us on the last tour we did, the 'Born In The USA' tour, also for those of you who might have ever wondered what it's like to sit where I sit during a Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band show. Well, if we can dim all these lights, I can give you a little taste of that.

VIDEO: 'BORN IN THE USA' (various footage)

Thank you! That is so much fun.

I'll tell you, there's no feeling quite like the one where I throw that drum stick up, and 100,000 people watch on the video screen as it bounces off my knee and falls between my legs! There's also nothing quite like the feeling like, you know, when Bruce raises my hand up after a great set like that, I mean that feels like victory. I love my job. I gotta tell ya that I think 1985 brought to me just about as many dreams as anybody could have come true.

I've been off tour now, gee, for almost a year and I've done a lot of thinking about what it's meant to me and I guess what it's meant to a lot of people. You know, the media, for example, said it was a very big tour, it was a big tour. You know, one of our road managers said that we, at one point, had 160 people on tour; working, not hanging out, with jobs. We had 35 trucks and 12 buses and then we had two stages, and it took two days to set each of those stages up. Yeah, it was big, but bigness, for me anyway, wasn't what it was about. What it was about was that the essential character of the E Street Band never changed, we were the same people playing the same music that we loved, Bruce's band, as we had been all along. And it was as much fun today as it was then. People ask me what were the highlights, you know, to give you the highlights of our tour, I feel like I'd have to give you the highlights of the highlights, there were so many.



Well, definitely one, and I'm not just saying this, was coming to London to play again, I mean, four* nights at Wembley - fantastic place to play, and I thank you on behalf of Bruce and the rest of the E Street Band for making us feel so welcome here. We also went to Japan and that was really something, none of us had ever done that before and we had musician friends of us tell us 'Now you guys are used to a pretty raucous reception, you know people really get into it at your shows. Don't be disappointed when you play in Japan that they just sit there and at the end of the night, they'll, you know, clap politely.' So anyway, we didn't know, we weren't expecting anything, Well, we hit the stage the first night in Tokyo and the place erupted, everybody went berserk, it was incredible, and they all sang the words in English! It was wild, you know. I gotta tell you about the Japanese, they were incredible dancers, and people ask, you know, can you see the audience? Well, you can definitely see the audience from back there, and it helps when they're groovin' and they're dancin'. I mean, that's my job, to get those people up out of their seats and having a good time, and they were doing it there.

One other thing happened in Japan that was one of the wildest things that ever happened to me. Ah - I was in the hotel, on my way to the concert, and this young kid came up to me and he had, underneath his arm, he had what looked to be a Japanese drumming magazine. You know, there was a story in the thing about me, and a picture; and he was holding it out, he wanted me to sign it. And his English wasn't very good, but we communicated, I mean, you could tell by the guy's smile and the look in his eyes that this meant a lot to him. And it meant a lot to me, because he looked at me and in very halting English, he said: "Mighty Max: your drumming - very special!" Yeah, I liked that, I took that memory home with me, it's one of my fondest.

We also played in Milan, Italy, on the tour, first time we'd ever done that, and a really incredible thing happened. During the show we play an old rock song, you probably know it, 'Twist And Shout'; Isley Brothers wrote it, the Beatles did the definitive version, and now we're doing it. But now during the show we play it at the end and in the middle of that song we get real quiet, and Bruce starts singing back and forth to the audience, and we're up there playing real quiet and he starts singing. From the right side of the stage, the whole section over here, came this melody, sounded like the old rock song 'La Bamba'. Well, they started singing it over here, and then that section started singing it, and then the centre, and suddenly the entire stadium was singing this melody. We thought "What's up?" Well, we found out later that that melody is the national soccer anthem of Italy, so when they started singing, everybody started singing it, everybody was really cool, you see we were playing soft and they were louder than we were. So it was like we were accompanying this 100,000 voice choir; it was wild. You know, they talk a lot about the community of rock'n'roll, that moment when all the barriers are broken down between the audience and the band, well, it was really in evidence that night in Milan. That was something.

Of course, playing in New Jersey is pretty special too, you know, because the funny thing about where we play in Jersey, Giants Stadium, very much like Wembley, it's a football stadium. And for me to drive from my house to that stadium I have to pass all those old bars and joints that I used to play, and let me tell you it feels real good driving through those gates, where they used to not let me into those gates! Now they open the doors, that feels real nice. But something happened at Giants Stadium, it's a story I'd like to leave you with tonight.

I came out after the show and I found a note on my windshield, now it was really something, and it was amazing the way this note hit me, and I don't know whether it was the fact that I'd just played in front of 80,000 people there, it made a very real connection with one solitary individual, and that connection was strong enough to move him to put something on my car. I don't know, maybe it was that, or whether what was written in the note proved to me and showed me that through all the ups and downs of my career, the last 20 years of playing, drums, nothing had ever really changed, and I'd really come full circle, because the note said: "Dear Max, I'm 14 years old, I play the drums and your drumming really inspires me; I guess you're like my Ringo Starr." Ah, that was nice. You know, I drove home that night with a big smile on my face and a warm feeling in my heart, thinking it's so nice to be able to pass the dream along. Thank you. You guys have been great. Thank you very much. Thank you! Hey, you guys are fantastic, I should have come here to London a long time ago! Thank you. Yeah!

Now as advertised, I will answer any questions you have, and there are microphones here in the aisles and they're gonna turn the house lights up. But before I do that I'd like to thank the people who got this performance together, it's Tim Parsons and Julia Collins who are to be wed in three weeks, and they really pulled this whole thing together. My technical guys at the Astoria Theatre which are Bob and Rob and Ray, Peter, Jonathan and everyone who really busted their hump to pull this thing off, and I'd also like to thank all of you, look at this, there's all these people here, it's fantastic. Thank you.

Now if you step up to the mike, you'll see a mike here, and I think there's a mike up in the balcony, and I'll be happy to answer any questions that you have, and yes, Bruce and Julianne are very happily married! OK, somebody shoot, first question.

Q. Can you tell me, how do these remix versions of your songs like 'Cover Me' get made and what role do you have in them?

(* EDITOR'S NOTE: Actually three shows)

A. Well, what the gentleman is referring to is that Arthur Baker, the dance-mix wizard of New York City, came up with some very creative arrangements of 'Cover Me', 'Dancing In The Dark' and 'Born In The USA', at the beginning of the tour. Basically what that was, was Bruce wanting to stretch a little, get into that dance/hip-hop area and see what this guy could come up with. My input is basically I played the drums on the originals, and Arthur Baker is a genius editor, so he cut everything up, put it all back together and came up with those arrangements.

Q. How do you feel about it?

A. Oh, how do I feel about it? Well! I feel OK about it, I think that personally it's kinda hard to top the original 'Born In The USA'; I think he did a great job on 'Cover Me' and 'Dancing In The Dark', and they're creative. I don't have any particular bad feelings or good feelings, it was a thing, but now it's not! You know.

Q. When is the band coming over here?

A. When are we coming over here? Well, I hope soon, we've been off now about a year and I know, I'm pretty sure we're going to be playing again. We always come to England. For American musicians, you know, it's a very big deal to come to England because my generation of American rockers learned it from you guys in a very large degree. So you know, 20-25 years ago when that happened; it's a big thrill for us to come over here, London's always been real good for us.

Q. I've read of songs like 'Murder Incorporated' which were not put on albums, will they ever be released? 'Cause I'd like to hear them.

A. Well, there's a lot of out-takes, you know, we probably got 200 things in the can. My hope is that one day they will come out. Um - 'Murder Incorporated' was a great song, and ah, there is no truth to the rumour, if you're wondering, that 'Murder Incorporated was actually the title of 'Born In The USA' before it was released. It's just one of those out-takes that's probably available on a number of bootlegs!

Q. Hello Max, you touched on this point earlier on: after seeing Bruce at various concerts; when he does an intro, he touches part of him and then the band are meant to go on. Now he's so intense with his introductions, what are the sort of gimmicks that give it away? When you come on to 'Rosalita', and the drum roll; what do you look for in Bruce when he stands there and says... in California in the last concert of the tour, with 'War', he just goes: "and what I'm talkin' about is - War", and all the band all simultaneously come on; what do you look for - what's the gimmick?

A. Well, I look for the presence of God! It's a help just to make those transitions! Well, he does do little, you know, in baseball they call them...I forget what they call them, he does give it away. It's very subtle, and probably I'm the only person who notices it, but before he's doing something, he'll start moving his right leg, and if he moves it in a certain way, because I'm so used to looking at him, I can tell when he's getting ready to throw me a cue. Basically it comes from playing with the guy for 12 years and you don't know what he's gonna do, but you know that he might do something; and I never want to have a replay of that 'Rosalita' night! You've just got to watch Bruce. I was going to say that: 'War' - we rehearsed that, I guess, about a half hour before we went on, and he came over to me right before we played it. We'd never played it before; he said "Just watch my hand." So I figured, he went - what he did do, to come into it, he went like that (waves arm downwards) so I figured when he got to the bottom, I hit it and I was hoping the other six guys would hit it with me!

Q. What do you feel about playing the big places like Wembley? I mean when we saw you before, you did the Arena, rather than the Stadium. What do you feel about doing the open places rather than the smaller more intimate places?

A. I like the stadiums, it's exciting. Ah, I know that probably a lot of the subtleties get lost, but I wouldn't say that we would never play small places again. But as a member of the band, the sound reinforcement is so good, it's such a sight to go up there when they turn the lights on and you see 90-100,000 people, it's very exciting, it's something that I always wanted to see. I feel that the energy and the style of our music does come across, even though some of the subtleties gets lost. I enjoy it myself, the bigger the better, you know, it really becomes like a club, in a way.

Q. (Unheard)

A. Well, we played up until that point, about - the question is, was there something lacking in spontaneity? I never took anything for granted up there, and no, it wasn't, we were well rehearsed because we'd played, at that point, probably 145 shows; we knew the songs! So maybe that illusion was broken a little bit. But I know what you're saying about big places versus small places, and we will be back.

Q. When's the next album, Max?

A. I don't know, and if you read about it or hear about it before I do, let me know! Well, no, we've just been on a long vacation, I've been doing this for about six months, talking to audiences. We've all just gotten back into life a little bit, you know, a tour like that really changes you. It changes everything about the way you look at things, because you see so much in such a compressed amount of time. So we're on a very long recuperation, you might say. We played, the E Street Band without Bruce, played with Nils about three weeks ago in Asbury Park, so we're slowly getting back into it.

Q. About eight years ago when Bruce used to say things like "To all you bootleggers out there in radioland - roll your tapes!" - ah, he doesn't say that anymore, does he?

A. No!

Q. The reason for the bootleggers are obvious, you know, because - I've got dozens of bootlegs, but it would never stop me buying - if there was a proper - like if there was a proper video - why has there never been a live album, and - the quality of bootleggers are improving and improving and improving. A proper live album might suffer in the end because everybody's got - well, I've got! Why did he never release 'The Promise' and 'Frankie' and 'The Way' and stuff like that? He could have released them on some of the 12-inch singles instead of some of the remixes.

A. Well, this is a perfect example of why they call him the Boss; that's a question only he can answer, maybe hopefully someday some of those songs will get released. 'Frankie' - interesting song; we played it one night in 1976, we never played it again (actually it was played several times - Ed.) and it was bootlegged! So that's the version you hear. I can't say that you'll never hear any of that stuff, and I certainly can't say that you would, because like I said, it's his plans.

Q. The rumours in music, in the press, are that there's something like a Bob Dylan retrospective, you know, five album set going to be released shortly?

A. I read those rumours!

Q. You never started them, then?

A. That's a thing about rumours; you never know.

Q. Max, we know that Bruce chooses most of the stuff you play each night, do you have any choice or does the band have any choice on what is actually played? I know he changes his set a lot, do you decide at all?

A. No choice! No, as a matter of fact, he'll change things and not even tell us! Yeah, we basically know what we're gonna play, but there's always a change up, depending, on if he feels a fast song or a slow song is needed. But as I said, that's why they call him 'The Boss', 'cause he makes up his mind and it's up to us, it's a very unique band like that, because you have people who are extremely keyed in to what he's doing.

Q. What's he really like personally?

A. He's great, he's a great guy. Very down to earth, very caring, very sensitive, very strong. No, really, he's a great guy to work with!

Q. (faint) Will he run for President?!

A. I didn't hear it.

Q. Is there any chance that we might be able to have a live video, you know, like a proper show; I'd love that.

A. I'd like one too! Well, I don't know that, you'd have to ask Bruce, and he's not here. Ah, you never know.

Q. Could you ask him?! (applause)

A. What is your name?

Q. Is that important?

A. Yes, I'll tell him that you wanted to know.

Q. My name's Valerie.

A. OK, I'll say Valerie - and I really will, I will ask him. I'd be curious myself.

Q. Max, can I just say thanks ever so much for coming over.

A. My pleasure. Thank you for having me, this is great.

Q. My questions are, in two parts, one: is there any chance of Miami Steve ever joining the E Street Band again, and secondly, is there any chance of you giving us the intro to 'Atlantic City', the band's version, before you go tonight?

A. Well, you know, no-one ever really leaves the E Street Band for long, and Steve's very dedicated in his career, he's made tremendous statements, very important statements, I'm sure you all know about them. Like I said, I was with Steve about a month ago, and, you know, it's like he never left, and he did play with us over here. Like I said, once you're an E Streeter, you're an E Streeter! Now you wanted to hear the beginning to 'Atlantic City'? You mean the drum part? OK.

(PLAYS INTRO TO 'ATLANTIC CITY')

And that's how it's done.

Q. You're from the Asbury Park area and a number of groups such as Southside Johnny and other people like Gary 'US' Bonds... they're always around at gigs, playing...do you ever get a chance to hang out with these people or to get together and sometimes go to, like, private parties, or that kind of thing?

A. I wouldn't say that we hang out a lot, but we do run into them, you know, we do see each other. Actually, in this last year we've all done so many individual things, Roy Bittan just recently had a baby boy, other people got married...actually, his wife had him! You know, but we do see each other, yeah.

Q. You played on Little Steven's 'Men Without Women'. Did you find a difference between Little Steven's music and Bruce Springsteen's?

A. Yeah, Steve's music is much more rhythm and blues oriented, very Motown oriented; for that particular album, he was listening to a lot of Motown, and that was the type of grooves that he wanted me to play. Bruce's main, I guess, rhythmic influence was Chuck Berry, so there you have a big difference. That record was cut live in the studio with no overdubs, we played each song once, and we got what you got, so that was a big difference.

Q. Do you know if he's ever gonna tour again?

A. I don't know, I know he's working on a record right now, yeah.

Q. I read a story at Madison Square Garden when on Bruce's 30th birthday a cake was passed up and he threw it back into the audience. Do you remember that incident? Is he as obsessed by his age as it seems from all his songs, and is it true he's had numerous hair transplants?

A. Ah, that's a long one! No, that was me! No, that's definitely not true and I don't think he's particularly obsessed about his age. He's a year older than I am and I'm not obsessed about my age. Actually I feel a lot younger now than I did about ten years ago, and yeah, I remember he did throw that cake in the audience; hates lemon meringue!

Q. I'm sorry to change the tone here but after the glorious tour of '81...but when I came to '85 I thought it was a real big

disappointment...the first part of the show... Bruce in '85 with my mates, we travelled...five or six shows, and I went to Newcastle and all I got was a view of scaffolding; I paid fifteen quid a ticket, I was really looking forward to seeing him...anyway I love him...I saw...bootleg videos, there's no videos at all, what's happening? What's happening? Where are the videos?

A. I don't know, I just play the drums!

Q. (unheard)

A. Well, we went to playing stadiums because an interesting thing happened, and the decision was really fostered by the fact that we would play four, five, six, sometimes ten shows in a city and that's about 200,000 seats, and we were getting requests sometimes for three million tickets. Three million people wanted to see those shows, and the only way we could get everybody at least into the stadium, to at least hear, to see what they could see, was to play stadiums. We only did, I think, in total we did 28 stadium shows. We did 130 small venues, so the scales weren't exactly balanced. Like I said, you can never tell, we might be in a club some day again.

Q. Are you taking this show to Scotland? I've got a few friends up there...

A. Scotland was fantastic, we played Edinburgh in '81 and I loved it, I had a great time, I hope we do get back there.

Q. No, are you taking this show, your show, to Scotland?

A. This show? No, not this time, but the reception was wonderful tonight, and I'm very heartened by that, and I hope to come back here and play more, maybe some colleges, and make it up to Scotland. So spread the word!

Q. Max, this is kind of a tacky thing to ask, but if I give you a pen, can you give me an autograph right now?

A. Right now? That's kind of tacky! Wait around afterward, I'll be around, OK?

Q. I read that each member of the E Street Band gets an equal take to Bruce. Do you get all the same takes from one concert?

A. How could I afford a shirt like this if I didn't?!

Q. So you and Bruce get the same amount of money?

A. As Bruce likes to say, we're partners in music.

Q. Does the E Street Band have any venues in Europe or in America that's particularly close to your heart, any favourite venues that you like to play, ie London?

A. Yeah, in New Jersey, sure that's always fun. In the Meadowlands Arena. Ah, the Stone Pony in Asbury Park is a nice place to play. Yeah, there are a lot of places. You know, when we started out, like most bands we played theatres like this, a lot were a lot smaller, and those places you tend to remember a little bit more than the municipal auditoriums where you were just hanging out before the show. We'd do soundchecks, and sometimes our soundchecks would extend into when they would open the doors, and we continued playing. So those are the kind of gigs that sorta stick out. The very first time we played an arena from a club - that was a big deal. The very first time we played Madison Square Garden, that was nerve-racking; and it was very exciting, because playing the Garden was like playing London,

it's a big deal gig. So there were a lot of places, I'm hard pressed to think of one specifically now, there were so many.

Q. I know you've done a lot of studio work with other musicians; do you have anything coming up in the near future?

A. Ah yes, I recently played on a record by a gentleman from Spain named Miguel Rios, it was great, this guy's real good, so; I don't know when that's coming out, but Tom Dowd produced it. Tom Dowd is a very famous engineer/ producer, who produced 'Layla', Eric Clapton's record, and produced with Phil Collins Eric's new record. I also played on and co-produced a record that I don't know if it's out here yet, it's called 'John Eddie'. It's a song called 'Jungle Boy', and that was the last studio work I did. I don't do a lot of studio work anymore.

Q. You did something with Meatloaf on a couple of albums?

A. I did, Meatloaf's first record, that was ten years ago!

Q. Max, you talked about the community of rock'n'roll. Were you disappointed not to be playing at Live Aid?

A. No, it was actually fun to watch it, because we'd been playing a lot and there was no particular reason why we didn't, other than we were spread out all over the country and it was just one of those things that didn't happen. I thought it was a tremendous effort, we all did, it was obvious the good it did and the profile it gave to the hunger problem. But I can't say that I was disappointed because I got to see, I was right on the side of the stage in Philadelphia, and I saw about fifteen hours of the most amazing music, so that was a lot of fun.

Q. When you're recording an album, do you lay the drum tracks down simultaneously, or do you just build up each track individually?

A. We play everything live, we all set up in the studio, just the way we do on stage and just play, and we usually do no more than

two or three takes of something; after three takes Bruce writes another song!

Q. Any overdubs?

A. Yeah, some overdubs, occasionally he'll punch in a vocal line or guitar, he plays lead guitar overdub riffing, you know. So that's overdubbed, but basically the rhythm tracks that you hear, everything's live, everybody plays at the same time.

Q. Is that just to keep the feel that you have on stage?

A. Well, that's the way we play, you know, if you've been in a band with five or six people, for 10 to 15 years, you become musical neighbours, you know what everybody's gonna do, so...what we do is not really an approach at making records, we make music; ah, it's a little bit different, things aren't built up in levels.

Q. Can I just develop this a little bit further? 'Cause when you said on 'Jungleland' when you came to Clarence's sax solo, you kept on getting it wrong and you had to record it again and again. If you'd recorded it individually like everybody else has done, surely that would have prevented the problem?

A. As a matter of fact the 'Born To Run' album was the last album where we did the multi-tracking technique, where on that record we put down the piano, the bass and the drums first, and, well, I should have said it was the section where Clarence's solo would have happened, you see, and we made the discovery with that record that we were much better when we played, and we got more energy out. We got what the E Street, East Coast Muscle thing was about and Bruce's thing by just playing live, you know, rather than overdubbing or multi-tracking.

Q. Max, when you're playing you seem to be enjoying yourself and your head's swivelling around and your arms are up in the air; did you ever knock your glasses off?

A. As a matter of fact, yeah, I did! Sometimes I'd come across and hit this crash cymbal, and I caught it right on the edge and I saw them fly across the stage and there was nothing much I could do about it. I was just hoping nobody stepped on them, I was so panic-stricken because I couldn't see anything, and somebody picked them up and gave them back to me. But it happens a lot, you hit your drums, if there's any drummers out there you know, you're always hitting yourself in places you wish you hadn't. On your nose, I mean in my case the nose is an easy target, and your fingers; you know. So I've knocked my glasses off. My glasses have gotten steamed up too, which is kinda funny.

Q. One more thing. What is the roll you play at the beginning of 'Hungry Heart', exactly what is that, and will you play it now?

A. Yes, I'll tell you exactly what that is. There was a fantastic drummer named Benny Benjamin, and he was the original Motown drummer, he played on all the very early stuff out of Motown. Unfortunately he died in '65 at the age of 35, but he was an amazing drummer, legendary. And he was the guy who came up with that Motown pick-up that everyone uses. In fact the most recent use of that is the Howard Jones single, 'No-One's To Blame', when the drums come in, that's that pick-up. Now broken down for anybody technically oriented, that's a 9 stroke roll, the way Benny Benjamin did it, but that's what I did. I'll show you what I mean. Now I'll take it slowly, this is what it sounds like.

DRUM DEMONSTRATION

So that's the roll at the beginning of 'Hungry Heart', it's a 9 stroke roll and can be found on hundreds of Motown records.

Q. Max, do you think that the original interpretation of 'Born In The USA' has been misinterpreted in America particularly by Reagan who's made a lot of speeches about glorifying America and everything?

A. Yes, I'm afraid it has been misinterpreted. It is a patriotic song in the sense that America, as I understand it from the song, showed a great deal of promise and for a lot of people that promise was put aside. And it's patriotic in that the possibilities of what America started out 200 years ago, and; somewhere along the line something got perverted. And I think that's what the song is about. And you know, you can interpret it - that's how I interpret it, you can interpret it any way you want. A lot of people onl saw, you know, this (raises fist) and that's not what it was really about, ah, it was about people.

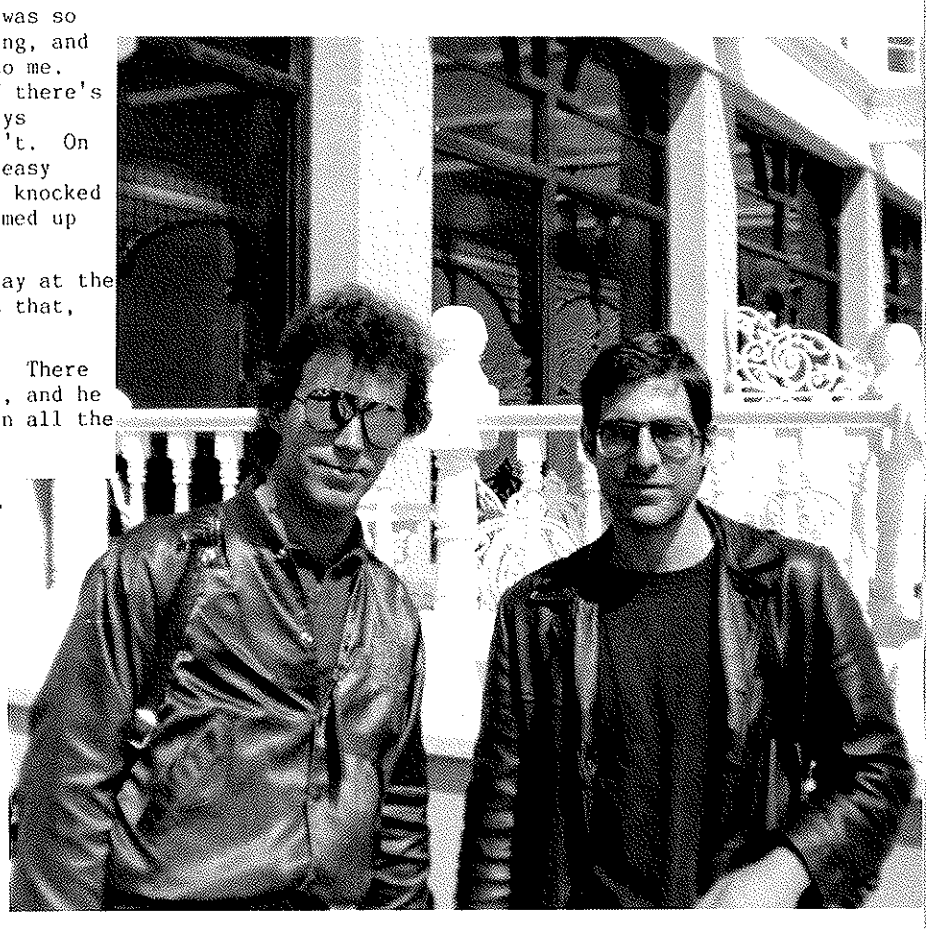
Q. Max, what's your least favourite Bruce track?

A. Ah, my least favourite; do you mean of what I've done on?

Q. Yeah, what you've done.

A. Ah, probably that, the drumming on 'Badlands', that I mentioned before, because I hear me at the age of 26, and I'm glad at the age of 35 I don't sound like that anymore! There was a lot of energy there, but as I said not a lot of finesse. But you know it's funny, when I listen to Bruce's music, I listen to Bruce, I don't really listen to me, or what anybody's doing individually. I listen to the emotional effect of what he's saying, of what he's singing, 'cause that's really the story of our band's music, is Bruce.

Q. I wonder if you could act kind of like an ambassador to Bruce and tell him, if possible, that he could develop a new kind of system for selling of the concert tickets.



I don't know how it is over here but in the States it's very bad because, like some fans, we camp out for long periods of time, then we see people in the front row who probably don't even have an album that get in through some corporation.

A. Well now, what you don't see is people in the front row from corporations, those tickets...I know what you're saying, it's very difficult to get tickets, it's been a problem with us for a long time and Bruce is very aware of it, he's very sensitive to it and he's racked his brain trying to figure out how to do it, lotteries, maximum of four tickets; the scalping problem is terrible. Nobody's invented a system for our touring or anybody elses's touring which, where it's foolproof. Ah, we feel very fortunate and very honoured that so many people want to see us play. There isn't a lot you can really do...he is extremely aware and thankful that people are standing in those lines, he wishes it could be someplace else. You know, have something else done instead of that; and it's a problem. He knows it.

Q. In response to that question about Americans and Ronald Reagan taking the song the wrong way, just remember that all Americans don't feel the way Ronald Reagan does. Bruce made a very interesting comment a few nights right after Reagan made that, in the city of Pittsburgh, he said that Mr Reagan must not have been listening to this song, and he went into 'Johnny 99', very effectively.

A. Yes he did, and that's how Bruce makes his statements, through his songs.

Q. Max, I was fortunate enough to see Nils Lofgren a few times on the last tour, I'd be interested to know ahat you think of him as a guitarist, and also the statement he made that he was the permanent guitarist in the E Street Band, and the comment you made earlier on about Van Zandt.

A. Yeah, well I think Nils is amazing, he's a great guy to be in the band. He's a great guitar player, he's a great singer, he's a great songwriter, so we have those three things in one guy, we're very lucky. He auditioned, it wasn't really an audition, he played two songs and it was perfectly obvious he was the guy for the job. He knew all the material, and like I said, when you join the E Street Band, you know, you don't just get hired for the tour, you join the band, so he is in the band, and I fully expect that when we do record again, he'll be there.

Q. Bruce has been showing a lot of emphasis on social issues, like unemployment, deprivation, more recently. Do you think rock'n'roll has a part to play in politics like that?

A. Well I think it does, and I think it's been pretty obviously shown that it does, you know. Rock'n'roll is about people, and it's about people's emotions and the issues that you speak of, unemployment, poverty, hunger, these are people-oriented issues.

Q. Sexism!

A. That too! What better form than rock'n'roll to bring these issues to the general public. What's great about the 35 year history of rock'n'roll is that now it's so mainstream that concerts like Live Aid, Farm Aid, Amnesty International concert tour, these things can happen and take place on a worldwide stage. I think the money that they raise is much, much less important than the awareness in people's minds.

Q. You said during the show that you hadn't drummed for about six months and then you got a call from Bruce one day to say studio time was booked for 2 o'clock the following day. Is it usually that spontaneous or are you given much more advanced warning?

A. Now, yeah, now we are! I might be in London! Yeah, in those days it was very much like that. It's a little bit more, you know, we're a lot older now, we're all ten years older and those days we played every day. Once we started doing something, we played every day. Now, when we record, and people ask why does it take so long to record an album. It's not that it's very difficult for us, it's just that he writes so many songs. Our basic approach is, he'll go off and write for three or four months and then we'll record 25 or 30 songs over a four or five week period and then we're off again. That's when I did my book and I'm able to do things like this. So it's not as momentary as it has been in the past. We get a little bit more notice, usually about three days now!

Q. In your book, Kenny Jones who you interviewed, he was talking about drum machines, and he said that because of that, he had to tend to be sort of a session drummer...do you have any opinions on this, on drum machines?

A. Oh, I have a lot of opinions!

Q. Are they positive?

A. Well, they're both, they're positive and negative. You know, the drum machine is sort of like the car, some people thought the car wouldn't catch on. And for certain things like racing, it didn't replace the horse, for horseracing, but it's a mode of expression, it's not drumming. Ah, my basic opinion is, what I do has nothing to do with a machine. If you want me to play, you get what I do. If you want a programmed drum part, it's not going to be what I do. I like that feeling of flesh and wood and skin and pain and blisters, that human quality, because...there are some great drum programmers, a friend of mine, Jimmy Bralower, is the best drum programmer in the States, for example he did all the programming on Stevie Wonder's new record, 'Higher Love', that's him. He's great,

but that's not what I'm into. I'm into sitting down and playing my drums. The unfortunate thing is that drum machines have put out, and synthesisers as well, have put a lot of musicians out of work, and I believe it's up to the musicians to think up ways to use these machines to their best advantage. I have no problem playing with a machine, you know, playing to a click-track or anything like that, that's a way to make a record, simply a way to get the job done. Drum machines will never replace drummers and drummers' imaginations. And I'll tell you an interesting story about a drum machine; I did a session, and the singer-songwriter was playing to a click-track, to lay down his vocal, and at one point he changed, he wanted to change something, and he kept singing and the guy inside stopped the drum machine. They could not get it synched back up; you know, they couldn't get the thing to go together again, and it was great! I was sitting there, laughing; because, you know, if a real drummer'd been playing, a drummer would have noticed that this guy was going off in a different direction, and would have been able to go with him. A drum machine couldn't do that, so there are things drum machines can't do.

Q. So there's no chance of us getting a programmable Max Weinberg?

A. NO!! And people tell me all the time they're trying to sample my drum sound, it's quite impossible!

Q. They did that with John Bonham, didn't they, with the Frankie single.

A. Yeah, if you notice, one interesting thing about records, why they're unsamplable at this point, because Bruce is always singing, and it has to be not surrounded; sampling is a way to take a sound and digitally put it into a box so some other drummer can hit the drum and it'll sound like me, the drum sound. No, I don't think there's a way to programme what I do, because what I do is very simple, and generally it takes a simple-minded person to do it, and people who programme are very into gadgets and, you know, not into programming simple things.

Q. So far as the actual execution of Bruce Springsteen's music is concerned, would you say he's an easy guy to work with, and is he moody? What's he like to work with?

A. He's great to work with, he gives you a lot of rope, you know, and you can either hang yourself or you can pull yourself in! Ah, he's really great, I've worked with people who are overbearing and he's not one of them. He gives me a tremendous amount of respect, never tells anybody what to play unless he's got a specific riff or something that he hears. That's the beauty of playing with this band, because it's very, very much like what it was like when we all started out in a garage. You just sort of sit down and play. There's not a lot of talking, we never have band meetings, you know, that kind of thing. He is in charge, you know, it's his thing, we are his colours, and we interpret what it is he wants to do and that's really the best way, it's a totally unique situation, I've never experienced anything like it. It's very comfortable and in terms of his being moody, he's no more moody than anybody who's trying to get it the way he wants it.

Q. Going back to 'The River' and the '85 tour; I've managed to see the band a few times in London and abroad. The sets seem very similar; going back to the '81 'River' tour, he varied it. I know you call him the Boss and it's up to him, but what do you feel about what's played...?

A. The question was, we played pretty much the same songs every night and it's true that we did. I think the reason we did that, my guess is that in those big stadiums everything had to be a little more standardised. A lot of the subtlety, the stuff we got known for, we couldn't really do because, you know, you're half a mile away, you're not gonna see it even if it's on a video screen. It turned out a lot of the people who came to the concerts in the stadiums were new fans who hadn't seen us before. We only did, like I said, we did Wembley, we did about 32 stadium concerts and those were mainly, I guess, for the new fans. 'Cause our tour was actually going to end after England, and at the point it was up in the air, were we going to play Wembley Arena for two weeks or four nights at Wembley Stadium, and that was the decision, so more people could see us. So more new fans could see us, people who'd bought the record. 'Born In The USA' at this point had sold close over 18 million records. Our core of fans number probably two to four million, so there's 14 or 15 million people who just found out about us in the last year and a half.

Q. Very quickly, I was front row Frankfurt, with a few of me mates, and it was very frightening down there and I wonder if you remember, I think it was the 12th of last year sometime...?

A. (mock surprise) Was that you?!

Q. That was me! I must tell you I've been to nine shows this tour and seeing the band come out, sort of ten feet away, it was the most fantastic thing I'd ever seen. With the crowd it was very frightening, and there was a lot of pushing and a lot of people fainting, and a lot of people being pulled out. I had to be pulled out after the second number. It was the most fantastic thing I've ever experienced in my life.

Q. Were Bruce's efforts to save the 3M factory in Freehold successful or not?

A. No, they did not close it.

Q. (Unheard)

A. Why don't I use a bigger set of drums? I think the original reason was because I used to have to carry them! and ah...no, for what I do, I'm basically in that Ringo Starr/Charlie Watts mould, basic rock'n'roll. For what I like to do, and I'm real fortunate to be able to play exactly the way I like to play, and that's to play Bruce's music, and the music business is a tough business and I consider myself very lucky that I did get to do what I always wanted to do, play in this kind of band.

Q. (Unheard)

A. No, no, no. I bought an electronic drum set and I played it once and I put it away because, it just..the feel wasn't right, you know. No, this is what I do: everything I like to do I can do on this, and I don't feel the pressure or the need to really...you know, I have played with bigger drum sets. I did a record with a great singer from Wales - Bonnie Tyler - and they wanted me to play a lot of tom-tom rolls. So I did play that. I mean I can do it, and it's fun, but if I had my preference, the four-piece kit is what I'd play. Any other questions? One more, on top.

Q. Are you married?

A. Yes I am, my wife Becky is sitting right out there! Let me just say, this has been a real thrill coming over here, performing this particular show for you, and you were great. This is the best crowd I think I've ever had. I will come back. Thank you a lot.

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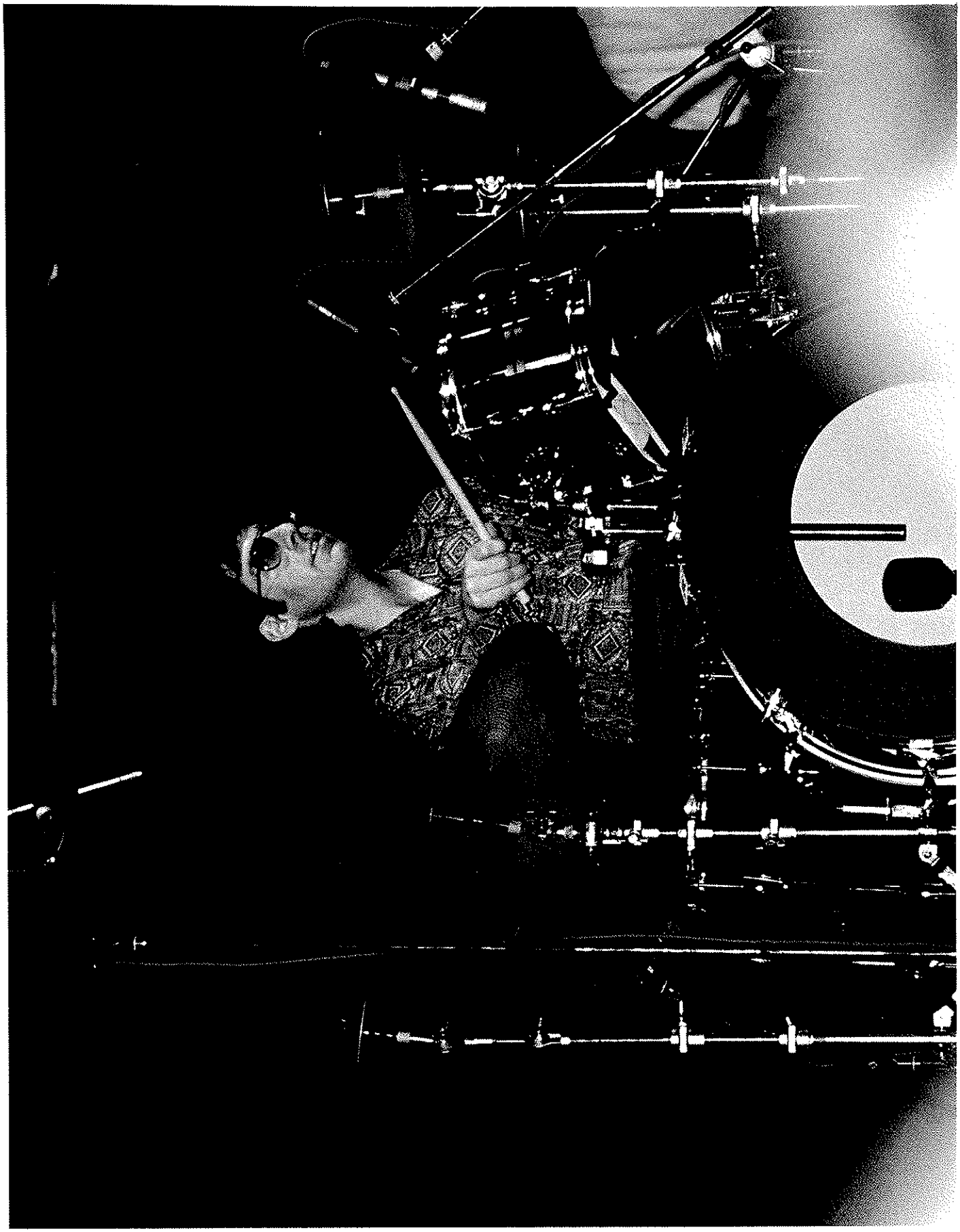

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